

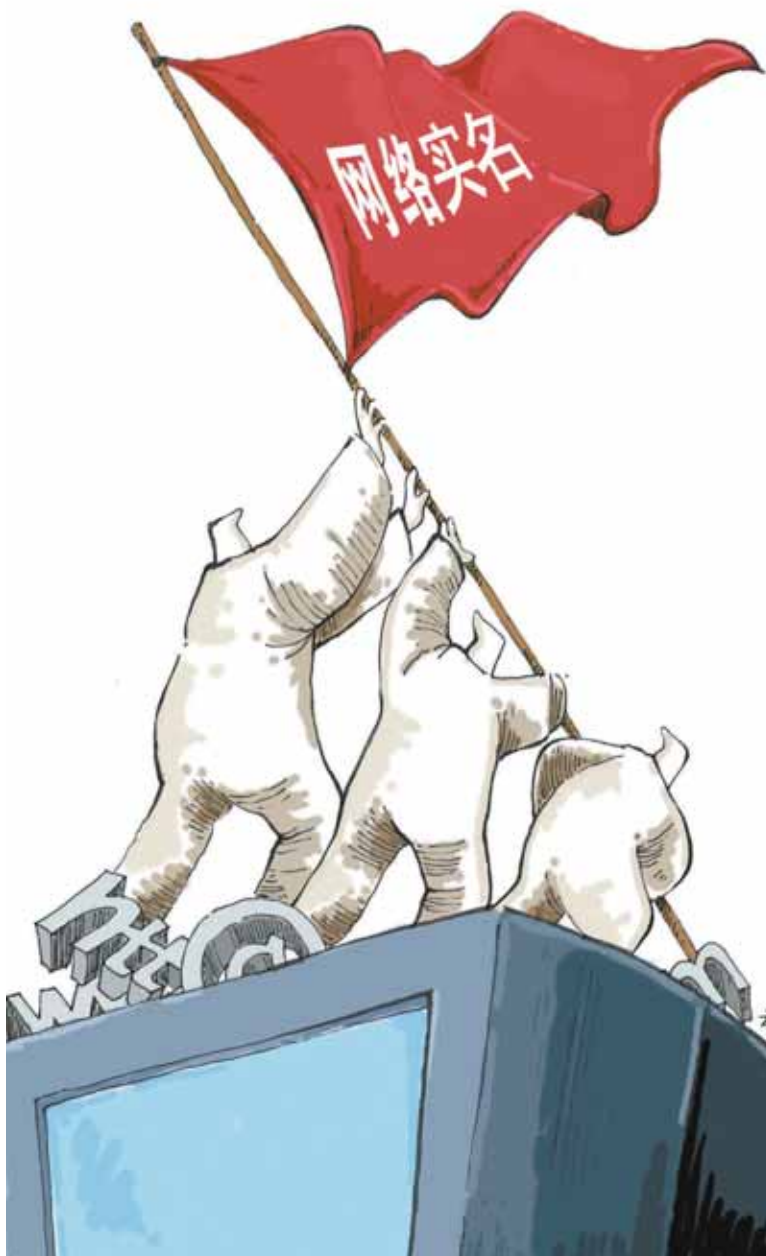


City to unmask microbloggers

The Beijing municipal government will require microbloggers to reveal their real names starting next month.

Real name registration is nothing new – train tickets and some online forums already require it. City officials say it will expedite rumor control.

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Surrogate mothers break law, birth 8

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Copyright battles could crush video sites

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Snowboarder trains China

Steve Zdarsky came from Austria to Beijing a decade ago with big dreams for Chinese snowboarding.



Pages 18

Sounds of a sweet singer

Big contracts aren't enough to lure the "pro warm-up band" Cha Liang Fen away from their indie dreams.



Pages 22

Bikers hit road by night

These young professionals prefer to get their exercise and exploration during the evening hours.



Pages 15

Old Beijing remembered

Ma Haifang is dedicated to preserving the style of Beijing folk painting.

Policy update needed as urban population overtakes rural

Experts have called on the government to adopt new policies as the country's urban population is on pace to exceed its rural population, a reversal of the nation's thousands of years as an agrarian society.

According to a blue book unveiled Monday by the China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), the country's urban population will outnumber its rural population by the end of 2011.

The latest nationwide census that ended in 2010 showed that the urban population accounts for 49.68 percent of the country's total.

It will not only mean a change in the percentage of the urban population, but also changes in people's lifestyles, employment, consumption and even values, said Li Peilin, director of the sociological research center of the CASS.

New policies, including employment measures and social insurance, are among experts' ideas for solving problems stemming from the mass rural-to-urban movement.

The government is now facing great pressures regarding employment as the huge rural population moves into urban areas, said Cai Zhizhou, deputy director of the China Center for National Accounting and Economic Growth of Peking University.

It needs to seek employment solutions for the new



The government is facing employment pressure as the rural population moves into the cities.

CFP Photo

labor force, particularly migrant workers, Cai said.

Economic growth in the last three decades has pushed hundreds of millions of farmers into factories and onto construction sites in the cities, and is the reason urbanization rose from about 18 percent in 1978 to around 50 percent today.

According to the blue book released by the CASS, the country has more than 240 million migrant workers, a

number roughly equal to the entire US population.

Moreover, about 40 percent of migrant workers have chosen to relocate their families to urban areas.

Rural migrant workers in cities should enjoy welfare treatment equal to their urban counterparts, said Li Changping, a former official who won fame seven years ago for criticizing the woes of farmers.

"The urbanization rate would make no sense if migrant workers were not treated as equal citizens," Li said.

Lu Xueyi, a prominent sociologist who has paid great attention to the problems of rural people, including migrant workers, said China has come to a critical juncture in its reform.

The average sub-district included 4,600 residents in 1978, but the figure has

jumped to around 21 times that and now includes 96,000 residents, Lu said.

"The current social insurance for migrant workers can hardly meet the demand, and it is causing confusion among social management," Lu said.

"It is time to change social policies to enhance China's urban development and further promote economic and social development," Lu said.

(Xinhua)

Radiation-stopping pregnancy clothes bring more harm than help

By Zhao Hongyi

Yang Lin married last year. At the beginning of this year, she bought a radiation-blocking pregnancy coat while preparing to have a baby.

Only three months later, Yang suffered a miscarriage.

But that would not come as a surprise to the makers of her coat.

Over the weekend, CCTV broadcast an in-depth investigation into the functionality and effectiveness of the popular radiation-blocking garments and accessories: it found that not one was effective in its purported use.

Taobao, a popular business-to-consumer Web platform, sells more than 640,000 items – from coats to skirts, aprons,

jackets, underwear and bellybands – that claim to shield their wearers from radiation.

Producers and sellers market the products as the best protection for pregnant women looking to shield their children from solar radiation and magnetic fields. One such radiation-blocking skirt sells more than 10,000 units each month, according to Taobao's records.

Consumers wrote many positive test experiences in the comments, saying they had tested and found that the skirts resisted burns and electrical conduction.

Many skirts were purchased as gifts for pregnant relatives, friends and colleagues.

"I didn't know anything about the effectiveness of the

product, but wearing it gave me psychological reassurance," Yang said.

Far from protecting the wearer from radiation, the CCTV report found that many products actually collected and concentrated it closer to the body.

"It's so horrible," Yang said. "The producers should be punished."

"Unless a person wears specially made protective clothes like an astronaut in space, no one can avoid radiation on Earth," the report said. "The only option is to reduce your exposure to it as much as possible."

Most of the products on the market are made of metal fiber or silver ions, according to the marketing text. Metal

fiber should block 99.99 percent of ambient radiation and silver ions can block as much as 99.9999 percent.

Some scientific laboratories that collaborated with the producers said their laboratory tests had found the clothes blocked 90 percent of the radiation directed at them.

But radiation comes from many sources in many directions. Protective suits actually trap radiation that enters from the wrong direction, dealing further harm to the mother and child.

Zeng Bo, a senior engineer at Guangzhou Electric Apparatus Research Institute, blamed the explosion of the market and the government's slow progress to regulate it

and enact standards.

While there are radiation standards for home appliances, there are none for clothing. Additionally, most of the lab tests were based on sample cloth rather than finished garments.

"These producers suspected of exaggeration and false promotion should be punished," popular fraud catcher Fang Zhouzi said on his microblog. "I encourage the consumers to stand up and defend their interests."

Fang said such deception could only happen in China, where many consumers are still swayed by promotional text.

"This is more evidence that our market is far from sophisticated," said Wang Jun, a professor of social science at Peking University.

Guangzhou 'octuplets' severe violation of one-child policy

By Zhao Hongyi

A rich couple in Guangzhou birthed eight babies last year with the aid of artificial insemination and surrogate mothers, local media reported this week.

What the couple did flew in the face of national policies and regulations, prompting the provincial bureau of health to investigate and punish all who aided the couple in their effort to circumvent national law.

The scandal has highlighted national questions of morality, class equality and values.

Eight babies

The unnamed couple has only been identified as a pair of business executives in their 40s.

Work prevented them from starting a family earlier in life. After several failed attempts at artificial insemination, the two resolved to try again at the beginning of 2010.

The medical institute they used successfully fertilized eight eggs, but they were far too many to implant in his wife.

The couple opted to hire two women to assist them in carrying out the pregnancy.

The mother received three eggs, while two surrogate mothers received two and three respectively.

The three women moved to the couple's villa in Fanyu, a city close to Guangzhou, for the duration of the pregnancy.

That's when things went wrong.

Contrary to the doctors' expectations, all eight eggs grew. Between September and October of 2010, the three women gave birth to all eight children: four girls and four boys.

The full procedure cost an estimated 1 million yuan, based on the price of artificial insemination and surrogacy, local media estimated.

The rich couple have recruited 11 babysitters to take care of the eight babies. They have to spend 100,000 yuan on the babies and their nannies each month.

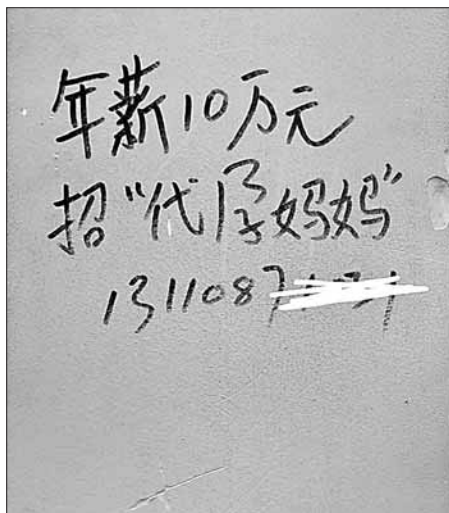
Evading the law

The eight births caught the attention of officials, who suspect the couple was trying to find a way around the nation's family planning policy, which limits most couples to having one child.

Authorities have loosened the policy in recent years, allowing minorities and parents who were both only children to have a second baby. Whether or not to further loosen the policy is a serious question.

But birthing eight babies at once by using expensive medical technology appears to make a mockery of the system.

The issue is further com-



Surrogacy is forbidden in China, according to a regulation issued by the Ministry of Public Health in 2001.

IC Photo

plicated by a provincial ban on surrogacy that has been in effect in Guangdong since 2003, when another couple hired two surrogates to help them give birth to five babies.

"We'll start with fining the medical institute that helped the couple through the process," an official from the Bureau of Health said.

"If they are suspected of criminal violation of the law, we may file a lawsuit and force them to face the consequences of their actions in court," he said.

The official said they are still investigating the case.

The province is conducting a complete check of medical institutes providing similar operations and services.

Official response

An official from the National Population and Family Planning Commission said in an interview that China is not opposed to artificial insemination.

"Couples who cannot get pregnant naturally can apply to the local population and family planning commission in their place of residence for permission to conduct the process in a designated hospital," she said.

In addition, the couples that receive an egg fertilized through artificial insemina-

tion must show their ID cards and marriage certificates, as well as proof that they have not already exceeded the number of children they are allowed under the family planning policy.

Couples in which one member is a foreigner should submit their passport and marriage certificates for the operation.

Without proper documentation, hospitals and medical institutes are supposed to refuse requests for this medical procedure, the official said.

Regarding surrogate mothering, the Ministry of Health stated in 2001 that no hospital or medical institute is allowed to offer artificial insemination services to anyone other than the legal mother.

But the business is prospering in developed coastal provinces where moneyed businessmen can buy their way around the law.

More challenges brought

Aside from the possibility of criminal prosecution, the birth of the eight babies raised other questions of morality.

"These children will spend their lives wondering who their mother is," said Chen Kuixing of the *Guangzhou Daily* in an editorial published

over the weekend.

More importantly, the story challenged the social fairness of a system in which poor families can have only one child while those with money can have eight.

"It's an abuse of the laws and regulations," Chen Kuixing appealed in his comment.

"Surrogate mothers are a touchy issue, since their use reduces women to a tool for birthing babies," said Xiao Fang, a critic.

"It is against nature, and that's why many European countries have banned its commercial practice," she wrote.

But most troubling has been the silence of the public and officials, Xiao said.

"Look at the officials who have spoken up," she said. "None are willing to give their real names and open themselves to scrutiny."

"This situation is a national shame," she said.

Many are waiting to see what, if any, measures the local government will take against the couple, the medical institute and the surrogate mothers.

Rational solution

Scholars remain pessimistic about bans and penalties, worrying that such restrictions will inevitably stimulate a black market.

"Look at narcotics smuggling," Wang Jun, a social science professor at Peiking University, said. "That market is thriving no matter how many smugglers you catch and execute."

The best way is to lead the business down a healthy road by helping the two sides get more prepared before the medical operation, clarifying legal responsibilities and setting up clear legal requirements for the procedure to avoid future disputes.

"The best way may be to raise the legal requirements for the operation, and to fine and punish the actual people involved in breaking the laws and regulations," he said.

But many believe the nation's laws will never cover all aspects of life. It may be better to find a way to implement the existing laws and regulations.

There are hundreds of agencies and institutes advertising surrogate mother services online. "Why hasn't the local government investigated them already?" said Pang Lan, a critic writing for *The Mirror*.

"The most important thing is to keep your eyes open instead of waiting for something so extraordinary to happen," he said.



The eight babies in Guangzhou were produced by artificial insemination and carried with the help of two surrogate mothers.



Year-ender: Soccer breaks hearts, again



Soccer fans hoist a banner saying "Never give up" to support the national team as it fails to qualify for yet another FIFA World Cup.

CFP Photo

Chinese soccer fans witnessed another year of fiascos, but this time, they have accepted it gracefully.

Both players and fans feel nothing unusual after seeing so many failures in recent years. Many say that Chinese soccer is "beyond redemption."

It's a small wonder that fans are so pessimistic.

The Chinese men's national team failed to qualify for the last two FIFA World Cups, and this time things were worse — they almost lost hope after the first four games in the third round of the Asian qualifiers and were eliminated after a useless victory over Singapore at the penultimate group game.

One can't blame head coach Jose Antonio Camacho, the Spaniard who took over for Gao Hongbo just 20 days before the first qualifying match. Three straight defeats to Jordan and Iraq sentenced the team to death. Some fans complained that the Chinese Football Association didn't replace Gao earlier, squandering what could have been four years of valuable training time.

Even Miroslav Blazevic couldn't change the fate of the Chinese Olympic team. After some hard fighting against an Omani opponent, the team failed to qualify for the 2012 London Olympics and set their worst ever record in the qualifying round.

"Chinese soccer must have a thorough revolution in the coming years to get rejuvenated, and combined efforts should be made to develop the professional leagues."

The hard-working Croatian tried his best to teach the young boys in the six months before the Olympic Asian qualifiers. Blazevic overestimated his players' ability to follow his tactics, which were exacerbated by crucial errors by a referee in an away match. Although Blazevic didn't want to leave with regrets, he bid farewell after a dispute with the CFA.

To rub salt into the wound, the Steel Roses suffered a heavier blow. After losing the chance to qualify for the World Cup last year, the once formidable Chinese women's team failed to qualify for the London Olympics.

Native coach Li Xiaopeng resigned after the qualifiers, claiming that the team had tried everything. The young women were in tears after the exit, unlike their men's counterparts who already felt numb and sad.

Chinese soccer must have a thorough revolution in the coming years to get rejuvenated, and combined efforts

should be made to develop the professional leagues, which have been troubled with match-fixing, gambling and corruption.

The government launched a nationwide crackdown on soccer gambling, match-fixing and corruption, which led to busts of former CFA vice presidents Xie Yalong, Nan Yong and Yang Yimin.

The first round of trials of corrupt soccer officials, referees and club managers opened on December 19 in two local courts in Liaoning Province.

The anti-corruption movement has helped to clean up the soccer environment, but stricter supervision and better control of the professional leagues and the CFA officials will be required before the nation sees real change.

Nevertheless, there are some positive things to say about Chinese soccer.

The youth training system has improved. The Chinese Ministry of Education and the General Administration of Sports have made efforts

to build a nationwide campus-based youth soccer training system, which now includes some 48 cities and 2,600 primary schools and middle schools, with some 470,000 league games to be played by the teens every year. The CFA also started to send young players between the ages of 12 and 18 to Europe and South America for training.

More than 100 young players have been sent to learn the game overseas in a project named "Future Stars" during the past one and a half years. Some boys even had the luck to be accepted by big clubs like Lyon, Liverpool, Valencia and Porto. A few may become prominent stars in the next eight years.

Second, the Chinese Super League (CSL) began to win back fans in the past season. Some real estate tycoons like Xu Jiayin of Guangzhou Evergrande club invested heavily in signing big stars such as Dario Leonardo Conca, MVP of the

Brazilian top class league, to enhance the CSL. The appearance of foreign players and famous coaches like Philippe Troussier has helped to elevate the league.

For the next season, Shanghai Shenhua signed Nicolas Anelka from Chelsea, and the CSL teams may have better performance in the AFC Asian Champions League.

The CSL saw its best-ever average attendance per game reach 17,600 in the 2011 season. And the Chinese central television station CCTV will begin live broadcasts of CSL games after a three-year ban that began in 2008.

Camacho and his assistants will remain to guide the national team under a three-year contract. The former Spanish coach's attack-minded theory has changed the Chinese players a little, and the tempo of the team has been increased. The Chinese players may learn more under the Spaniard and change their basic understanding of soccer.

Moreover, the Chinese youth national team is now under the leadership of Dutch boss Jan Riekerink, the former Ajax youth team coach.

If the Chinese players can learn from these foreign coaches and be more creative on the field, they can help Chinese soccer follow the trends of neighbors in Japan and South Korea. (Xinhua)

Ensuring stability

Annual economic conference to map out 2012

"Stable" is going to be a keyword for the country's economy next year, if voices from the annual Central Economic Work Conference last week are to be believed. The three-day conference, one of the most important economic events in the country, has set the tone for next year's economic development.



Fireworks at a steel factory in Anhui Province. The government hopes a more proactive fiscal policy will be more effective to spur growth next year.

Wu He/CFP Photo

The Central Economic Work Conference concluded on December 14. The gathering, which brought together high-ranking Chinese officials, was the last major economic policy meeting this year, and observers were looking for evidence of the central government's intention.

London-based *Financial Times* said the meeting signaled the government's concern over the slowdown in growth.

Figures from the National Statistics Bureau show that the country's growth has slowed for three quarters in a row. Some economists predict it could further fall below 9 percent next year.

The government will focus on

maintaining fast economic growth in the midst of what it described as an "extremely grim and complicated" global outlook, *Financial Times* reported.

"Growth has replaced inflation as Beijing's top policy concern," the report quoted Qu Hongbin, co-head of Asian economics research at HSBC. "The economy is likely to slow further, calling for more aggressive easing measures."

Another key message from the conference was to maintain stability.

China's goal next year will be "making progress while maintaining stability," Reuters reported. Stability means to maintain basically steady

macroeconomic policy, relatively fast economic growth, stable consumer prices and social stability.

BBC said the conference laid out "prudent" plans for the year against an uncertain economic outlook.

"The trend in the global economy on the whole is grim and complicated. Uncertainties are rising around a recovery," the conference statement said.

But it added: "China will ensure that macroeconomic regulation policies and overall consumer prices will remain basically stable and will guarantee the steady growth of the economy and maintain social stability."

(Agencies)

The third eye

'Real economy' matters for China's future development

By Huang Daohen

To many observers and economists, the central government is trying to take steps to stimulate the economy.

The policy next year will be more pro-growth, said Chen Gucun, researcher at China Academy of Social Sciences.

Chen said the trend is evidenced by the People's Bank of China's recent moves. In November, the central bank cut the reserve requirement ratio (RRR) by a half-point for major state banks.

This month, the move was further followed by half-point reductions in RRR for both large and small banks.

"That is a signal for the country's monetary policy," Chen said. Not surprisingly, bank loans last month were up from forecasts, and an easing policy is now in effect.

But Chen said a change in monetary policy can be only minor.

These days, nothing is headed in the right direction as exports, domestic consumption and industrial orders are declining. And since Europe is falling apart while the rest of the world stumbles, Chen said the problems will get worse.

The country has to revive its real economy, he said.

Real economy, Chen said, refers to economic activities related to the actual production of goods and services, like agriculture, manufacturing and the service industry.

"They are the foundation of a nation's economic strength and require a long-term mechanism to support their development," he said.

Since earlier this year, many small- and medium-sized companies in the

country's south — mostly privately owned — have been through a difficult time due to rising costs.

Wenzhou, a symbol of the economic hub in Zhejiang Province known for its entrepreneurs, was hit by a severe debt crisis this year. Many private firms were forced to turn to the underground lending market, as they failed to get funds from state banks.

When many couldn't repay their high-interest loans, they ran away. Chen said that will do great harm to the real economy.

The government has taken measures to help them weather the crisis, but Chen said there should be a long-term system to support the real economy, including creation of support policies and a stable business environment.

Brief

China becomes world patent leader

(Reuters) — The country became the world's top patent filer in 2011, surpassing the US and Japan as it steps up innovation to improve its intellectual property rights track record, a Thomson Reuters research report showed on Wednesday.

The report said the world's second-largest economy aimed to transform from a "made in China" to a "designed in China" market, with the government pushing for innovation in sectors such as automobiles, pharmaceuticals and technology.

However, legal experts said the country would need to do more before it can lead the world in innovation as the quality of patents needed to improve.

The government provided attractive incentives for domestic companies to file patent applications, regardless of whether a patent was eventually granted, they said.

"The idea of subsidizing patents is not bad in itself, however it is a blunt instrument because you get high figures for filings, but it does not tell you anything about the quality of the patents filed," said Elliot Papageorgiou, a Partner and Executive at law firm Rouse Legal in China.

Referee admits accepting bribes

(AP) — A Chinese soccer referee has admitted in court to taking bribes to fix local and international matches, including a 2007 friendly game involving Manchester United, Xinhua reported Tuesday.

The case of Huang Junjie, a referee for more than 20 years who has been nominated as one of the country's best, is one of a number of hearings under way followed a probe into Chinese soccer corruption.

He accepted \$245,000 (1.55 million yuan) of bribes to fix two international friendlies and admitted to taking 20 bribes from six Chinese clubs between 2005 and 2009, Xinhua reported.

The international matches included a 2007 exhibition between the English Premier League's Manchester United and China's Shenzhen. Huang took HK \$100,000 (\$1,000 yuan) in bribes to let Shenzhen win the coin toss, Xinhua said.

Police probing blast at Apple supplier

(AP) — Shanghai police are investigating the cause of an explosion over the weekend that injured dozens of people at the factory of a Shanghai supplier to Apple Inc.

The government formed an investigation group and ordered safety checks at the Riteng Computer Accessory factory, a wholly owned subsidiary of Apple supplier Pegatron, said Gan Shanjuan, an official in the information office in Shanghai's Songjiang District.

Critics have taken Cupertino, California-based Apple to task for alleged violations of labor and environmental standards by its China-based suppliers, and the company has said it is working to resolve such problems.

Free lunch is over

Copyright fights make streaming video a race to the bottom

By Huang Daohen

Business in the money-burning streaming-video market is war, and anyone who falls behind is muscled out.

The key to winning used to be rather simple: find good content that you don't have to pay for.

This line of thinking may be behind the recent copyright feud between video giants Youku and Tudou: the country's two top online video providers are accusing each other of copyright infringement due to the distribution of unauthorized videos.

Experts believe increasing accusations will translate into a sharp increase in the content costs. For young Internet users, this could mean an end to the free availability of their favorite TV series.



Youku, Tudou and Sohu are the top three providers of streaming videos and advertisements.

CFP Photos

Youku-Tudou fight

Xiao Xiao, a 23-year-old office worker in Beijing, is a big fan of *Kangxi is Coming*, a popular Taiwanese entertainment show.

She watches a new episode every night when she gets home from work.

"It's funny and relaxing to watch the host bantering with the guest stars," Xiao said. "They tell personal stories and make fun of each other. It's very different from the usual serious shows aired on the mainland."

But recently she's been concerned about the copyright brawl between Youku and Tudou, the nation's two largest operators of online video sites. Tudou said Youku is illegally broadcasting *Kangxi*, and that it had obtained the exclusive right to broadcast the show on the mainland from Taiwan's CTI Television.

Tudou, together with CITV, is preparing a lawsuit against Youku that would demand 150 million yuan (\$23.6 million) as compensation for the copyright infringement.

The lawsuit could force Youku to drop the show.

And for Xiao, a VIP member of Youku, she would have to turn to Tudou for *Kangxi*, giving up the years' collection of TV shows stored in her Youku account.

Youku seems prepared to contest the accusation. As of Wednesday, Xiao was still able to find new episodes of *Kangxi* on the site. The firm still attached its banner ads and short commercial clips to



Victor Koo (left), CEO of Youku, and Gary Wang, founder and CEO of Tudou, at a signing ceremony last year in Beijing. The two firms agreed to pool videos resources.

each episode.

"I felt shocked at first, then became worried. Since no big change occurred yet, now I feel confused," Xiao said.

Following Tudou's accusations, Youku announced this week it will sue Tudou for pirating its own copyrighted content.

Tudou has violated Youku's broadcast rights to more than 60 TV series, said Jean Shao, Youku's spokeswoman.

But Yu Bin, vice president of finance at Tudou, said at a recent press conference that Tudou "completely denies" the infringement claims.

Shao said that Tudou's claims were "unfair and misleading."

All about business

This is certainly not the first time that copyright disputes have occurred in the country's online-video industry.

In recent years, entertainment websites and video streaming sites have been the

subject of many lawsuits.

But to Steven Kang, an industrial analyst at Oriental Securities in Beijing, the Tudou-Youku fight is less about copyright enforcement than it is about business rivalry.

"It's not because these firms suddenly found a new appreciation for intellectual property rights. As listed enterprises in the US, they have to compete with each other by licensing quality content to win viewers," Kang said.

Shanghai-based Tudou made its initial public offering (IPO) on the Nasdaq this August, raising about \$174 million. The IPO by Beijing-based Youku raised \$233 million last December.

But online video is a money-burning business due to the high costs of bandwidth and content acquisition. Tudou reportedly paid about 10 million yuan for one year of *Kangxi*.

Neither Tudou nor Youku has turned a profit in the last three years, according to Bloomberg News.

The country's two leading online-video sites started out with business models similar to YouTube, which hosts a large amount of user-generated content. Tudou said as many as 50,000 video clips are uploaded to the site every day, and it has about 40 million users.

But Kang said the problem is that many users uploaded unauthorized video content, including US TV shows.

TV series like *Lost*, *The Big Bang Theory* and *The Vampire Diaries* are wildly popular among young Chinese. Kang said those TV shows were usually recorded by overseas Chinese who sent them back to the mainland using BitTorrent or other video-sharing websites.

The process has even become a profitable business, as some went further by translating the script and creating subtitles, Kang said.

But both Tudou and Youku realized that widespread copyright infringement and public listing overseas were not a good mix.

"It is time to clean up the content," Kang said.

Content is the key

Tudou said it would continue to focus on improving its video content and promises no less than 100 million yuan to be spent on acquiring new copyrighted content each year.

Youku also teamed up with some popular content owners and started to create its own

original videos.

Kang, however, said Sohu, the country's major news portal, leads the pack for copyrighted video content. Sohu Video has become the largest online video site offering legally licensed content.

"Obviously, the Internet giant Sohu has much more money for buying copyrights," Kang said.

Kang said the battle is just beginning. "When other portals such as Sina, Tencent and Baidu join the war, the battlefield will become even more intense," he said.

The country has about 394 million online video users, and this number is expected to hit 445 million next year, according to a Nielsen report.

Online advertising spending will grow between 30 to 40 percent year on year in 2010 as brand-name multinationals such as KFC, Nike and Coca-Cola are already advertising on video websites, the report said.

Kang said 2012 will be not be quiet for the country's streaming video market as independents, portals and state-run TV stations pour into the industry.

"Though there is no way the battle will be won simply by providing the best copyrighted content," he said.

Kang forecast a sharp increase in the cost of content purchased by online-video firms.

"In the long term, this means the free lunch of streaming video may be at an end," Kang said.

Beijing implements real-name registration for microblogs



Use of microblogs has been growing rapidly in China.

Xu Zhengchang/IC Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

Last weekend, the municipal government released new regulations for microblogs that require all users to register with their real names and biographical information.

Officials say those who refuse to register with their real names will not be able to open their own accounts, send messages and leave comments.

Those who submit inaccurate personal information are subject to legal penalties, including fines.

Part of the reason for these regulations is to prevent people from "buying" fans. Many celebrities have done just that to boost their popularity, or to make it look like they have more followers than they actually do.

The Press Office, Public Security Bureau, Communications Bureau and Internet Information Office of the municipal government jointly announced the new regulations on Sunday.

They said they will help all websites in Beijing to clear their microblog accounts and implement the regulation in the next three months.

Microblogs are changing the way news gets disseminated. The new regulations are sure to hit China's users hard.

As of the end of November, China has 320 million registered microbloggers – or 65 percent of Internet users in this country – according to statistics from the National Internet Management Office.

Microblogs have replaced online forums as the second biggest source of information about scandals, after traditional news outlets.

But microblogs have also become the source of rumors and misinformation.

Public security forces have closed down many microblogs in their various campaigns to clean the Internet.

Real-name registration has been used in other areas before, including online forums and blogs, but it always attracts controversy.

Earlier this year, Beijing adopted real-name registration for the purchase of train tickets, a plan that turned out to be a success and is being emulated in other cities.

broader space to communicate and exchange ideas.

– Wang Jun,
professor of social sciences,
Peking University

The core issue is morality of our country's citizens

The core issue and problem here is the failing morality of some people, not only on the Internet but in nearly every aspect of life. I'm not sure this real-name registration system will change anything.

– Chen Yongdong,
editor, soft6.com

Debate of the week

Contraceptive museum plan misfires

Plans to build a museum devoted to contraceptives in a base where teenagers receive military training has created controversy.

Officials are considering building what would be the National Museum of Contraceptives in Rudong County, Jiangsu Province, reported the local Modern Express.

It would include a 10,000-square-meter hall, an education center and a contraceptive theme park – details of which were not provided.

The proposed museum would tell the story of contraception in the country through the ages and detail the achievements of birth control in Rudong County.

But the proposal has been criticized by some nearby residents who claim it would be inappropriate to locate the museum in a suburban area where young people are sent each year for military training.

"Most of the visitors to the base are teenagers or younger children, and I don't think a contraceptive museum and theme park is suitable for them," said one concerned netizen.

However, there were also voices of support for the museum, with some netizens arguing that sex education should start early and that teenagers would learn about protection through visiting the museum.

Teacher fired for demanding printed apology

A teacher at a primary school in Dalian, Liaoning Province has reportedly lost his job after forcing a student to make a public apology to him in a newspaper, eliciting online debate over ethics in the teaching profession.

The apology was posted as a classified ad in *Dalian Evening News* on Monday: "Teacher Liang, I am XXX. I apologize to you for what I did. I know I've hurt you. Please forgive me."

The teacher had overheard the student call him a fool. He initially asked the student and his parents to apologize to him within two weeks. When this deadline passed, he insisted the apology be printed in the local newspaper.

Liang was subsequently dismissed by the school for his demand.

The incident has drawn different responses. The grandfather of one student at the school in question considered Liang's dismissal to be too severe. A guard at the school blamed the media attention for the teacher losing his job, saying, "Liang has been teaching for about 20 years. He is a nice man and always greets us when he passes the gate."

Others disagreed with Liang's action. A retired teacher surnamed Liu thought the punishment for Liang was appropriate and felt standards had slipped from his day.

(Agencies)

Comment

A positive step

I believe real-name registration is a positive development in our efforts to clear the Internet of false rumors, personal attacks and porn. I believe we'll find more reliable news, constructive criticism, objective comments and frank communication online.

– Gao Fusheng, commentator,
China Youth Daily

Big Brother expanding its reach

The real-name registration will force you to leave your records and backgrounds to the websites. Once anything unusual happens, the

police will find you easily. In addition, I can't believe they want to give these websites our personal information – forever.

– Xiao Qiang, netizen, Beijing

An attack on bad netizens

I don't think the Chinese government has any intention of tightening its control on netizens. It's merely a censure of netizens who act irresponsibly, who spread false rumors and pornography, and who use their microblogs for commercial gain. The new regulation will help us to clear the microblog platform and give us a

Snowboarding as lifestyle

By Han Manman

Chinese snowboarding officially went global last year after some of the world's most famous snowboarders descended on the capital to showcase their talent. As a result, a growing number of China's youth have developed a keen interest in the sport.

How things change in a decade.

Ten years ago, Steve Zdarsky first arrived in China and found no trace of the sport he loved. Now called the "pioneer of Chinese snowboarding," Zdarsky's efforts to promote snowboarding have been relentless. He's had a close and personal look at how China's snowboarding lifestyle has arisen.

Serious injury

Zdarsky, 31, was born into a skiing family in Styria, Austria. His grandfather, Nathias Zdarsky, was an early ski pioneer and is considered one of the founders of modern Alpine skiing technique. Zdarsky's father runs a small ski school in Austria.

When Zdarsky was 3, he already had his own skateboard and ski shoes. His father hoped the little boy could one day become a famous skier.

At 12, however, Zdarsky discovered snowboarding. Watching boarders on the slopes, the boy fell in love with the bold, free-flowing sport, and decided to switch from skiing.

At the time, many Europeans felt snowboarding was too wild, too freestyle. Some came to associate the sport with the counterculture, which included booze and drugs. Zdarsky's decision to switch to snowboarding disappointed many in his family, especially his father.

"After that, he refused to talk with me for two years," Zdarsky said.

But his enthusiasm for the sport only increased. At 15, he turned professional. Then, he began trying alpine snowboarding, an exciting but risky variation.

One time, he got buried under an avalanche and almost died.

"If the rescuers arrived five minutes later, I would have died," he said, adding that when he was rescued, he had become incontinent and was covered with his own urine and feces.

At the age of 18, a freak collision knocked him out, caused him to lose six teeth and chipped a bone in his knee.

Zdarsky said he spent the next year thinking about his future. When he got back on the snowboard a year later, he was hesitant, no longer fearless. He decided he needed to change his life.

And that's when he began to study economics and Chinese – the latter because his



Zdarsky has helped build a snowboarding culture in Beijing over the past 10 years.

Photos provided by Steve Zdarsky

mother liked Chinese food.

"I was a pretty good student, so the Austrian government sent me to China to study," he said.

Coaching in China

In 2000, Zdarsky arrived at a university in Shandong Province to study Chinese.

He was still not fully recovered from his snowboarding injuries, but he couldn't resist heading to Yabuli Ski Resort, one of the largest ski resorts in China, during the winter.

He told the people there he was a snowboarding instructor, though no one had heard of the sport before.

"In fact, there were only a few people who had ever snowboarded in the entire country at that time," he said.

Zdarsky was determined to introduce the sport to the country. Eventually, his name began circulating among the skiing community, and he was introduced to people in Beijing to help at Nanshan ski resort – to build a snowboarding culture.

Zdarsky's job was to teach ski instructors how to snowboard, and to translate a snowboarding manual into Chinese.

At first, Zdarsky was unhappy and lonely, as few of his friends were willing to take up this new activity.

But as more foreigners arrived in Beijing and took up snowboarding, slowly locals did as well.

"Now, we've got 200 really hardcore snowboarders who

are out here every day," he said. "They live it, they breathe it. We've even got people living on the mountain so that they can snowboard all year-round."

"They live the lifestyle, they only hang out with snowboarders, they spend the time to download all the movies and learn all the tricks."

Further development

Many local snowboarders say that if it weren't for Zdarsky, snowboarding would not be anywhere close to where the sport is right now in the city.

Zdarsky has trained more than 20 snowboard coaches and at least 10 professional snowboarders. He's most proud of creating the Red Bull Nanshan Open, China's first international snow-



Steve Zdarsky

boarding event.

"At first, we just wanted to hold a Chinese snowboarding party, but we never thought the party could one day be as well known as it is now," he said.

The Nanshan Open began in 2002 when a small group of friends organized the first snowboarding competition at Nanshan. As the contest grew, it was recognized in 2007 by the Ticket to Ride (TTR) World Snowboarding Tour as a 3Star event (6Star is the highest level).

The event was upgraded to 4Star status in 2008, and in 2010 became the largest Asian event on the tour.

After a decade of driving the Chinese snowboard scene, the Red Bull Nanshan Open will celebrate its 10th birthday in style on January 14 and 15. It is expected to be upgraded to 5Star status and become the largest slope-style snowboard competition in Asia.

"Fifteen years ago, the Chinese had nothing, no money, no cars. Now, every day you see something new," Zdarsky said. "So in the last 15 years, people have gotten richer, they have more spare time, they want to do something during the winter, so there's snowboarding."

He said he thinks more Chinese will fall in love with the sport in the future.

And for all his success, Zdarsky now has the support of his father.

The snowboarder said he might stay in China for the rest of his life. It's here that he met his wife, a former snowboarder for the Canadian national team.

"She fully understands my snowboarding dream and supports my career here," he said. "Snowboarding is my life."

The mourning of Kim Jong Il

By Han Mannan

Many among Beijing's North Korean community mourned the passing of leader Kim Jong Il on Monday after they learned of his death.

Kim, officially the general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and chairman of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) National Defense Commission, died from "great mental and physical strain" on a train during a field guidance tour on December 17, the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency reported at noon on Monday.

At the DPRK embassy in Beijing, the flag was lowered to half-mast.

"My grief is beyond words," a middle-aged consulate official told Xinhua. He said he would support Kim Jong Un, the youngest son of Kim Jong Il, in carrying on the work of the late leader.

People were seen holding flowers on their way to mourn Kim at the DPRK embassy in Beijing. Some placed flowers on a table under a picture of Kim and wept.

Many North Koreans in Beijing have stopped entertainment activities and several restaurants



The flag was lowered to half-mast Monday at the DPRK embassy in Beijing. **Xinhua photos**



North Korean people holding a wreath to mourn the death of Kim Jong Il in Beijing.

in Beijing associated with the DPRK were closed for business on Monday, Xinhua reported.

Moranbong, a North Korean restaurant in Beijing, was closed by orders of the North Korean embassy Monday morning. Another restaurant run by North Koreans, Pyongyang Asiatic Apple Flower, is still open, but all domestic performances have been suspended. Employees at both Moranbong and Pyongyang Asiatic Apple Flower were heard weeping and crying loudly, some netizens wrote on their microblogs.

In China's nearest border city to DPRK, Dandong, many DPRK nationals rushed back to their home country to mourn the death of Kim.

Meanwhile, travel agencies in Dandong suspended DPRK travel services. A manager surnamed Wang told Xinhua that such services would not be open to the public until January 20.

The vast majority of DPRK-themed restaurants were also closed. Although Korean song and dance performances used to be the major Christmas events in Dandong, all of them have been canceled, Xinhua reported.

The Chinese government on Monday offered its "deep condolences" to the DPRK.

"We are shocked to learn that the DPRK's top leader, comrade Kim Jong Il, passed away and we hereby express our deep condolences on his passing and send our sincere regards to the people of the DPRK," China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu said in a statement.

"We believe the people of the DPRK will definitely be able to turn sorrow into strength and remain united in order to continuously push forward the socialist cause of the DPRK," he said.

Meanwhile, some locals voiced hope that the country's relationship with China will not be affected.

[illegible]

Roundabout book fair to warm orphanages

Roundabout, a charity distribution store, and Beijing Rego British School will host a book fair on January 14 in Shunyi to raise money for buying coal in orphanages.

In November, they had the first book fair and raised 50,000 yuan. The money has been used to buy coal for two orphanages in Hebei and Shanxi provinces.

The next book fair will be hosted on Rego's campus. Children's books start from 1 yuan, paperbacks from 10 yuan and hardbacks from 20 yuan. Coffee-table and art books are available as well.

The event is also collecting books anyone may want to donate: just drop them off at the school before the fair.

Roundabout Charity Store is the first and only charity distributor of its kind in Beijing, founded in 2008.

Instead of simply asking people to donate, the store's founder, Leslie Simpson, has worked on different methods in getting people involved.

Last year before Christmas, Roundabout organized a brunch fundraiser that raised 5,675 yuan, which was donated to a community of elderly people living in Hebei Province who had no family to look after them. Much of the money was used to buy new quilts and coats.

Where: Beijing Rego British School, 15 Liyuan Jie, Shunyi District

Open: January 14, 10 am - 3 pm

Tel: 8416 7718

(By Wei Ying)



Leslie Simpson (right), store founder

Photo provided by roundaboutchina.com

Event

Open Mic night

Every first and third Thursday of the month, Library 98 will host its Open Mic night. The activity is an open-mic event for anyone with something to say, whether in the form of improv and comedy, stand-up or cross-talk.

Where: Tushuguan 98, 53 Gulou Xi Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: December 29, 8-10 pm

Tel: 8400 1532

Cost: Free

BSB Parent Workshop

Part of the British School's "helping hand" series, this workshop helps parents learn to support their children's English development at home. All parents are welcome. Refreshments will be available.

Where: British School Sanlitun campus, 5 Xiliu Jie, Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: January 11, 3:45-4:45 pm

Tel: 8532 3088

Cost: Free

(By Wei Ying)



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Places to practice tai chi this winter

By Zhao Hongyi

Even though the temperatures have dropped, you can still get your exercise in by doing tai chi.

Tai chi is an aerobic physical exercise that helps the joints and muscles. It's ideal for people who spend much of their day sitting at desks or in front of a computer.

The activity also helps relax the nerves, and is easy to learn for people of all ages.

Here are three options for people interested in taking it up.



CFP Photo

Master Chen's Tai Chi

Master Chen's Tai Chi has been around for 500 years. Its current instructor, Liu Wunian, is in his 70s and is the co-founder of Master Chen's Tai Chi Association in Beijing.

Liu holds free classes every morning on the tennis courts at Tiantongyuan, a large residential community in the northern part of the city.

Every weekend, Liu attracts hundreds of practitioners, making his class an astonishing scene, even for tourists.

Liu is also a calligraphy master. After class, he likes to exchange views with his students about calligraphy and antiques.

Liu has many apprentices who have opened classes around Olympic Green Park and the Asian Olympic Games Village. Interested individuals are welcome to take part.

Time: 7-9 am, every Saturday and Sunday

Where: Tennis courts, West 3rd Block, Tiantongyuan, Changping District

How to get there: Take Subway Line 5 to Tiantongyuan station

Tai Chi Zen House

This house sits in Guanyintang Pagoda Park, southeast of Gaobeidian. The environment is ideal for practicing tai chi.

Master Lu Chun and his friends lead the

activities. The elementary class costs 800 for three months. You can register for a whole year for 10,000, 30,000 or 50,000 yuan, depending on the level you're interested in.

Apart from the charged classes, they also hold free demonstrations at the park between 11:30 am and 1:30 pm every Wednesday.

Time: 7-9 pm, every Tuesday and Thursday

Where: Tai Chi Zen House, Guanyintang Pagoda Park, Gaobeidian, Chaoyang District

How to get there: Take Subway Line 1 to Sihui station, then Bus 363 to Guta Park.

Tel: 8739 9455

Master Xie's Charity Program

Residents around Ritan Park know Master Xie for his free tai chi classes from 8 to 10 am, which attract dozens of people every time.

Xie is a retired soldier. He has practiced tai chi since childhood, and is now an advisor at Beijing Boxing Association.

"I hope that everyone will develop a strong and healthy body through practicing tai chi," he said. Xie has taken 69 apprentices.

Time: 8-10 am, every day

Where: Ritan Park, Ritan Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Price: 150 yuan

Tel: 6506 3672

Tips

1. Wear loose-fitting trousers and soft shoes. You'll want clothes that make you feel comfortable doing motions like dragging and stretching.

2. Be sure to wear layers to keep warm. Tai chi seems slow and light, but if you practice five minutes, you'll perspire. Make sure to cover your body and especially protect yourself against the wind so you don't catch a cold.

3. At the beginning, your muscles will ache and feel sore. But after more practice, your coordination will greatly improve, as will the results.

4. Perseverance is key. If you practice for 15 minutes a day, you'll reap the activity's full health benefits.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

What are Beijing's regulations for outdoor skating? I want to take my daughters skating on the weekend.

For safety reasons, we recommend skating at public places like Houhai, which is open to the public when the ice is thick enough.

Our family plan to have a great New Year's party, and we'd like to actually hire a Peking opera singer. How can we do this?

You can contact Beijing Fenglei Jingjutuan (fengleibj.com) at 6301 7386. Their manager, Song Yan, has publicly said they have a tight schedule around this time of year, but you can try to see if they have any extra performers.

Do you know where I can find vinyl records around Beijing? Some flea markets or shops?

Waiting for Godot near Beixinqiao subway station has a small but fairly interesting selection. They have some old Chinese records along with retro Western stuff. (4-24 Jiaodaokou Dong Lu, Dongcheng District)

(By Wei Ying)

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Autumn in Huangshan 1

By He Jianwei

Located in southern Anhui Province, Huangshan has inspired millennia of poets and painters. From the Tang (618-907) to Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, more than 20,000 poems were written about its majestic heights. During the Qing Dynasty, Huangshan actually became the namesake of a school of painting. Many modern masters of Chinese ink, such as Huang Binhong, Zhang Daqian and Li Keran, continue to use its scenery as a frequent subject. But contemporary artist Hong Ling breaks from the pack in his use of oil to paint the mountain. Hong has lived in Huangshan for 20 years, capturing the four seasons of its forests on his canvas.



Hong Ling in his courtyard studio at the foot of Huangshan, Anhui Province



Mountains



Autumn in Huangshan 2

The hermit of Huangshan



Photo provided by Soku Art.net



Winter in South China

when seeing endless crisp mountains and misty rain," he said. "The greatest work I have created in the last 20 years is my garden. It is consistent with my paintings' shift from modern to traditional."

In March, he saw his work *Cold Snow*, a painting created in the 1990s, hanging in his friend's house. Under the moonlight, the water of a serene pond formed a mirror to reflect the forest. That was when he realized how much his life had changed in the past 20 years.

"I left the city, where I had lived for over 30 years to live on a mountain in Anhui Province. Twenty years passed and I continued to create art and live on the mountain," he said.

"I'm searching for a sense of calm as I draw closer to nature. Surrounded by the mountains and waters, I feel a sense of spiritual enlightenment – like I have completed a journey of purification."

Boundless Momentum – Hong Ling Solo Exhibition
Where: Today Art Museum, 32 Baizwan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until December 26, 10 am – 5 pm
Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 5976 9804

He finished his work, *Wild Mountain*, in 1988, and submitted it for the Exhibition of Chinese Oil painting at the Museum of Chinese History.

"My 1988 piece marked the beginning of my journey to explore Chinese nature, the establishment of my studio in Wanman, the south side of Anhui Province, in 1992 confirmed my dedication to practicing art in nature," Hong said.

In the early 1990s, he revisited Huangshan and decided to build a studio. It was a troubling process, and few of the plots available were suitable.

After considering seven to eight other lots, he finally found a place.

"Although I was not familiar with feng shui at that time, I was adamant that my studio should be on a mountain that was not too high. When I came here, there was a dirt road for the cars to transport canvas," he said.

At first, he built a modern home, but soon reworked it into a courtyard. He grew bamboo in the garden, because it was a plant favored by the traditional literati.

"The image of bamboo is central to Chinese culture. There is no other plant that is so close to our daily and spiritual life – the chopsticks, the baskets in the markets, the crafts on the Xit'an River and the flute conveying a musician's emotion

Hong started to paint with oils at the age of 16, when he saw a painter in a park near his home painting the trees and clouds.

In spite of his fascination with oil paints, Hong was sent to study Chinese ink painting at the age of 14. His mother hired Wang Guangxu, a veteran painter, to train her son in traditional painting.

During this time, Hong took to reading the *National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art* that his grandfather subscribed to in the 1970s. Although he could not identify the dynasties of each landscape, the experience made a great impact on his creative process.

When he first went to southern Anhui Province to paint in 1982, Hong recognized the scenes as a source of inspiration for ancient painters.

At that time, there were only dirt roads. He took the bus from Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province at 6 am and arrived at Huangshan at 11 pm.

"I had the urge to come to the mountain because I always believed it was the heaven of Chinese painters," he said.

During the 1980s, Hong searched for his own artistic language. Many artists, caught up in the New Wave Movement of 1985, dared to create abstract works: Hong focused on landscapes in oil.

A big chestnut tree at the foot of Huangshan forms a canopy over a traditional courtyard.

The lone tree produces more than 50 kilograms of chestnuts every year. The courtyard beneath it is a typical southern home with a mountain behind it and a river before it. It has pavilions, arch bridges and zigzagging corridors.

Two characters on its iron gate read "Hong's House."

From his home studio, Hong has a panoramic view of the Xin'an River and the forests of Huangshan, scenery that has been his muse for the past 20 years.

Last Sunday, Hong took viewers to the foot of Huangshan with his latest solo exhibition at the main hall of Today Art Museum.

Hong is regarded as the master of landscape painting since Huang Binhong (1865-1995). But as a contemporary artist, Hong has fused the essence of Chinese painting with the medium of oil. Finding a way to harmonize that combination was a 10-year project.

Born in Beijing in 1955, Hong graduated from the Art Department of Beijing Normal University in 1979 and finished a graduate program in the Oil Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts eight years later.

The Shakespearean drama of an unclaimed son



Michael Lindsay-Hogg

By Charles Zhu

Michael Lindsay-Hogg, a film and Broadway director, recalls his Shakespearean drama of life as the unclaimed son of actor and director Orson Welles in his book *Luck and Circumstance: A Coming of Age in Hollywood, New York, and Points Beyond*.

Lindsay-Hogg was born in 1940 in New York City to actress Geraldine Fitzgerald and was educated at Trinity School in New York and Choate School in Connecticut.

Fitzgerald and her husband, Sir Edward Lindsay-Hogg, a 4th Baronet and British national, tried to make him believe that he was their natural son. Sir Edward left the US in 1943 to travel in Ireland, Spain and Italy. Lindsay-Hogg described him as "a man of fragile temperament" who was virtually a phantom in his life.

His stepfather was Stuart Scheftel, who married Fitzgerald when Lindsay-Hogg was six, after she had divorced Sir Edward.

Scheftel was a businessman and a grandson of Isidor Straus, one of the owners of Macy's, who died on the Titanic with his wife, Ida. Scheftel and Fitzgerald had a daughter, Susan. Though his stepfather always seemed to support his ideas or decisions, for instance his plan to drop out of school at the age of 16 to appear in a play, their relationship was lukewarm and he always kept his stepfather at arm's length. Lindsay-Hogg writes in the book, "If he had a fault, it probably was that he'd married my mother, supplanting my little self."

As Lindsay-Hogg grew up, he sounded extremely like Orson Welles, who was well known for his baritone voice, both in conversation and on the phone.

Welles worked extensively in film, theater and television after starting his career in radio drama. *Citizen Kane* (1941), his first film with RKO, in which he starred in the role of Charles Foster Kane, is often considered the greatest film ever made.

Welles is noted for his innovative dramatic productions as well as his distinctive voice and personality. In 2002, he was voted the greatest film director of all time in two separate British Film Institute polls among directors and critics.

However, for years, rumors about Lindsay-Hogg's true parentage, hinting at Welles, abounded, but he was

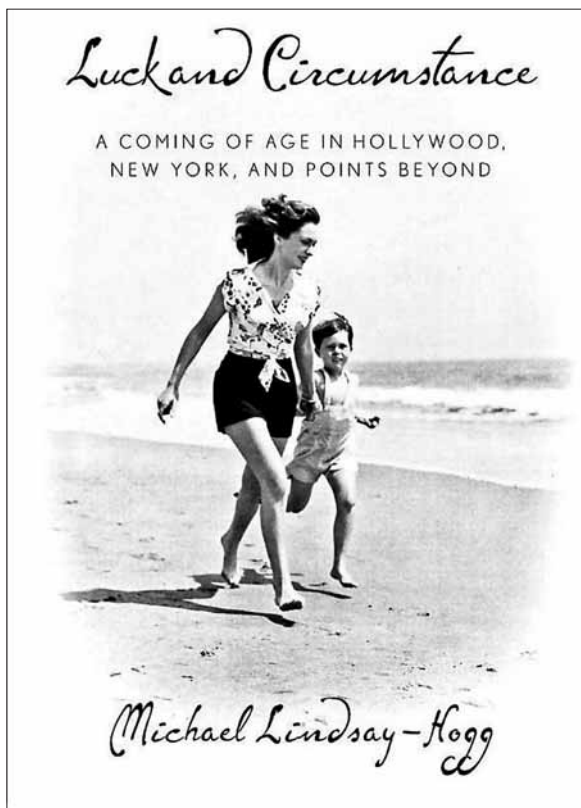
at first uninterested in them.

It turns out that Welles in 1938 directed *Heart-break House* in which Fitzgerald played a role. Although they each had their own family, Fitzgerald became pregnant while her husband was in New York. They lived together in Beverly Hills. Fitzgerald did not want her son to know her liaison with Welles and told her son, "We'd go out for dinner together, and you know how people can put two and two together and make three."

On a school vacation at the age of 14, Lindsay-Hogg's mother brought him to Off Broadway for the rehearsal of the play *The Doctor's Dilemma*, directed by Sidney Lumet. This sparked his lifelong enthusiasm for the theater.

He first met Welles as a teenager in the mid-1950s and acted with him at the Gaiety Theater in Ireland, and continued to meet with him for the rest of Welles' life. Welles offered Lindsay-Hogg a job as his assistant on a play starring Laurence Olivier.

Once, Fitzgerald gave a party which Welles attended. However, "I didn't see or hear from Orson for three years," he writes. This mode of relationship lasted for the rest of Welles' life: They would see each other and have a friendly conversation and then separate for years.



Luck and Circumstance: A Coming of Age in Hollywood, New York, and Points Beyond

By Michael Lindsay-Hogg, 288pp, Knopf, \$26

Lindsay-Hogg began directing the 1960s British pop program *Ready Steady Go!*, a forerunner of MTV-type programming. This work led to an unaired television special, *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* (1968), which was finally released in 1996.

He acceded to the baronetcy in 1999 upon the death of his legal father, Sir Edward Lindsay-Hogg.

However, his success would never match his biological father's. Some people say it might have been a blessing for Lindsay-Hogg to never know his paternity. "With a genius for a father you can only fail by comparison," he writes.

In January 2010, Lindsay-Hogg took a DNA test to determine if Welles was in fact his father. The test was inconclusive, as the hair used in the test did not contain a follicle. Confirmation of his true parentage came after Lindsay-Hogg sent a copy of his unpublished autobiography to his mother's friend Gloria Vanderbilt, who confirmed that Welles was his father.

At 71, Lindsay-Hogg can now look at his imperfect family and find something to love in his stepfather, his birth father who always eluded him and his always lying mother. A critic says that is the closest thing to luck – as the title of the book suggests – most of us can hope for.

Trends Lounge book listing

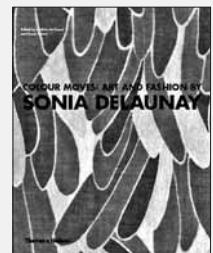
Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of books about international art, design and architecture.



Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen

By Juliet Kinchin and Aidan O'Connor, 88pp, MoMA, \$24.95

This collection examines the 20th-century transformation of the kitchen through the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, featuring a wide variety of design objects, architectural plans, posters, archival photographs and art, ranging from the iconic Frankfurt Kitchen, mass-produced for German public housing estates in the aftermath of World War I, to an electric tea kettle, heat-resistant glass wares and colorful plastics, such as Tupperware and Japanese artificial food.



Color Moves: Art and Fashion by Sonia Delaunay
By Matilda McQuaid, 204pp, Thames & Hudson, \$50.5

The book focuses not only on abstract painter and colorist Sonia Delaunay's art but also her avant-garde fashion designs from her own Atelier Simultane in Paris during the 1920s and textiles she designed for the Metz & Co Department store in Amsterdam in the 1930s.



Architects' Sketchbooks
By Will Jones, 352pp, Metropolis Boos, \$49.95

It is the first survey to present pages from the private sketchbooks of 85 international spectrum of architects, who use drawing to express their spatial ideas while revealing their unique thought processes.

(By He Jianwei)

Artist obsessed with Old Beijing

By Charles Zhu

With a shaved head, long cloth gown and traditional shoes, Mai Haifang looks like a gentleman from a bygone era.

But the 55-year-old Ma is a leading contemporary artist who adheres to the local painting traditions that are being lost as the nation's art becomes increasingly homogenized. His unusual attire is part of that effort to ground himself in the sentiments of the past.

Ma presented more than 40 new works at his solo exhibition, *Remembrances of the Ancient Capital*, early this year.



Illustrated by Ma Haifang

Ma Haifang is a master of traditional brush and ink painting. Most of his work follows the boneless style, with scant outlining only where necessary.

The style gives an impression of both rustic simplicity and historic gentility. While he pays sufficient attention to realism, much of his style comes from mild exaggeration.

Despite his training in traditional ink and brush at the National Academy of Arts in the late 1970s, Ma has never been one to boast about his background. Today he works as a house artist for the People's Publishing House of Arts and as professor at the Academy of Arts of Rong Bao Chai.

He spends much of his time collecting, collating and discovering art that smacks of unique Beijing flavor.

The pieces have been essential in inspiring his artistic depictions of Beijing folks, such as street peddlers selling candy-coated hawthorns and roving craftsmen who sharpen kitchen knives. He also paints folk artists and acrobats at the Heavenly Bridge Fair in the southern part of the city.

As a gifted artist, Ma has an eye for the casual and yet extraordinary street sights of two old men playing chess and of vendors who help scrape out their customer's earwax. He imbues these characters with such irresistible artistic force that they come to life on paper – leisured, attentive and funny.

Long lost customs and foods also command his artistic attention. He has painted fried dessert balls made from mixed bean flour and noodles, and Beijing's "tea soup," where boiling hot water is served from a large kettle onto a small bowl of milled millet, osmanthus and sesame.

His inquisitive brush portrays one delicacy that has already been lost: *yang shuang chang*, literally frosty mutton sausage. The dish is made by filling intestines with sheep blood and cooling them. The blood-filled intestines are then boiled in an assortment of spices, including coriander, and covered in a frosty-looking layer of sheep fat.

Most vivid are his images of bird breeders, locally called *niao'er ye*. They often go out to meet each other, typically in a grove of trees, and hang their bird cages on the branches to sit and gossip while the birds sing. Ma said the men in the groups are never allowed to curse, for fear the birds might start imitating such foul language.



Make daily items more playful

By Annie Wei

Part of the charm of shopping lies in searching for practical items with that special little something, be it a designer's flourish or an eye-catching color. Call it competitive shopping: seeing who can come up with the best gifts. In any case, the receiver will certainly appreciate it.



Yuanbao bowl, 185 yuan

This bowl has a lip in a shape of yuanbao, the ingot currency of ancient China, which is a symbol of good fortune. It is one of the most welcome gifts for Chinese families during Spring Festival.



Jewelry for rent

A new jewelry brand, Weigu Gongfang, rents out its pieces. It has many different options to match the occasion. The annual fee starts at 480 yuan for five pieces.

The brand has a wide selection of designs with Chinese characters. To try the jewelry and decide which one to borrow, visit its workshop near the Drum and Bell Tower.

Where: 103B-C, Building A, 206 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
Open: 9:30 am - 5:30 pm
Tel: 6402 1822 / 13901146165 (weekends)



USB flash drive in Christmas package, 228 yuan

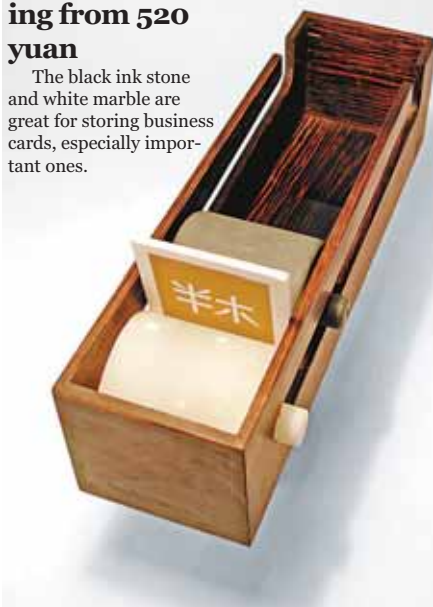
Along with the stapler and printer, a USB flash drive is one of those items that might not seem essential for an office until you desperately find yourself needing one.

Don't let your office friend get caught short-handed this the coming year.

The flash drive gift set comes in five designs: polar bear, gingerbread man, deer, Christmas penguin and snowman.

Business card holders, starting from 520 yuan

The black ink stone and white marble are great for storing business cards, especially important ones.



Beer bottle opener, 188 or 198 yuan

Most people don't buy bottle openers, content to use whatever cheap one they have on the fridge. But a well-made opener can be a thoughtful gift. The Banmoo opener is made of hard wood in the shape of cobblestone. It's well polished and easy to use. Your beer-drinking friend will be tempted to open bottles just because he can.



Where to buy these gifts:

Websites: banmoo.cn

Wowsai.com

Cngadger.cn

Ewceo.com

Beijing delivery store:

Xindingyi Culture and Media

Tel: 13810218689 (10 am - 6 pm)

Quality Chinese wines

By Annie Wei

If you think China can't produce quality wine, you're wrong – and now there's proof. Last week, wines from China went up against a wine from Bordeaux at a blind tasting at Zun Club, held by TasteV, a new wine sharing site, and Jim Boyce, a local blogger.

A Chinese wine won.



Ten judges grading the wines



The wine tasting event at Zun Bar was advertised as Ningxia vs. Bordeaux.

The competition

There were 10 judges, five from China and five from France, who were asked to rank 10 different wines. First place got one point, second place got two points, and so on.

Grace Vineyard Chairman's Reserve 2009 (488 yuan), a wine from Shanxi Province, came in first with 34 points. Second place went to Silver Heights The Summit 2009 (416 yuan), with 42 points. Helan Qing Xue, Jia Bei Lan Cabernet

Dry Red 2009 (220 yuan) was third with 44 points.

Rounding out the top five were Grace Vineyard Deep Blue 2009 (228 yuan) and Barons Rothschild Collection Saga Medoc 2009 (350 yuan), the wine from Bordeaux.

The wines were opened and tested for quality by Philip Osenton, who works with the distributor Globus and used to be the head sommelier at the Ritz Hotel London.

The judges are all wine experts active in the booming wine industry, including Ma Huiqin, professor at China University of Agriculture; Fiona Sun, senior editor at the China edition of *Renue du Vin*; Nicolas Carre, sommelier and wine consultant; and Jerome Sabate, wine maker with Dragon Seal in Beijing.

"Some Chinese wines are able to compete on an international level," Boyce said.

Vineyard stories

With a booming wine market in China, the blind tasting attracted lots of interest from home and abroad.

Some compared the event to the Judgment of Paris in 1976, when California wines beat top French wines in a tasting. That event was considered seminal for the California wine industry.

Boyce, however, made sure to point out that organizers never meant this contest to be a competition between the best that China and Bordeaux have to offer.

They used a price index to compare top Chinese wines with bigger and better-known Bordeaux brands sold by major distributors in town.

Nonetheless, Boyce got hundreds of emails and calls inquiring about Chinese wines

and vineyards.

Grace Vineyard Chairman's reserve 2009

This wine has a gooseberry aroma, is spicy, full-body and balanced. It tastes smooth and has a long length.

The Grace Vineyard was founded by a successful businessman and wine lover, Chen Jingqiang. For years, Chen was bothered by the fact that China could not produce quality wine. With the help of friends, winemakers and scholars from France, Li set up Grace Vineyard in Shanxi Province in 1997.

Chen was asked many times why he chose a highly polluted region like Shanxi, known for its coal and mining industry, to start a vineyard. Chen said he ran a successful coal mining business in Shanxi many years ago and

felt responsible for the environmental damage he might have caused. The vineyard was his way of compensating.

Silver Heights The Summit 2009

This wine has good tannin structure and mouthfeel, is well structured and has a good finish.

The vineyard is considered the highest in China because it is located on the eastern slopes of Helan Mountain in Ningxia Autonomous Region.

The grapes get plenty of sunshine, but the soil isn't the most fertile, so vines need to go deeper to absorb water and nutrition.

Its owner, Emma Gao, is one of the few woman winemakers in the country. Gao's father decided to produce Chinese wine and sent her to learn winemaking in France many years ago.

Helan Qing Xue Jia Bei Lan Cabernet Dry Red 2009

This wine gives off rich fruit aromas, tastes spicy, is full-bodied and has a long, intensive finish.

Helan Qing Xue's winery on Helan Mountain is a half-hour drive from Yinchuan, capital of Ningxia. The winery is run by a partnership between a local grape industry group and private investors. Li Demei, a professor at Beijing University of Agriculture and a leading Chinese wine expert, is the winery's chief consultant.

Grace Vineyard Deep Blue 2009

It has a nice aroma and is spicy, with fresh acidity. It pairs well with meat.

Barons de Rothschild Saga Medoc 2009

A fruity and balanced wine.



The competition featured 10 wines.

Photos by Jim Boyce

Sweet, cute and serious sounds

By Li Yi

Last month, a posting for a mysterious musical event, called Nǚ Shuǐ Zài Zāo Yē, appeared on Douban, the largest Chinese website for movies, books and music reviews. The promotional poster showed a girl from an erotic Japanese comic wearing a wet shirt.

Last Wednesday at Mao Livehouse, all was revealed.



The band Cha Liang Fen
Photos provided by Cha Liang Fen

Qian Jide, one of the organizers of the event, has been influenced by Japanese comics ever since childhood.

"I named this event. If I tell you the English translation is Heroine, you might understand," she said. "All the bands have something in common: their lead vocalists are sweet and cute young women. I contacted the bands and discussed the name of the show with them, and they all liked my suggestion, so we went with it."

By using an erotic image, Qian said, people would be more likely to take notice.

"People like controversy," she said. "Our poster is a little erotic, but it stimulates people to come watch the show. When fans know the theme, it's easier for them to feel the soul of each band."

The first band to take the stage was indie rock outfit Cha Liang Fen, founded in 2009. Vocalist Lil Owl's voice was indeed sweet, but it was also powerful, and coupled with the keyboard, the resulting sound was fresh and ethereal.

The band performed six original songs.

"We don't have any musical training except for our keyboardist," said guitarist Xiao Liang, who quit a doctorate program in Australia and is now an administrative officer in an education bureau.

Like many indie bands in China, all the musicians have other jobs: bassist Liu Ning is a mobile phone app designer (and also one of the designers of the event poster), drummer Mai Mai works at an IT company and the vocalist is an editor of a travel website.

"Everybody has another identity during the day and different backgrounds, but music bonds us," Liu said. "We have had more than 40 demos in two years. Every time we rehearse together, we play many versions, then we discuss tones, rhythms and lyrics, and find the best way to perform."

The vocalist, who prefers using her stage name, Lil Owl, joined Cha Liang Fen over the summer.

The players call themselves a "pro warm-up band," but they've been offered professional contracts before, only to turn them down. "We'd rather find a good producer than get a big contract; we concentrate on our music, not the business," Xiao said.

The band wants to record more demos.

"When we got together, we just played for fun," Liu said. "Now we're getting serious. We'll join more shows and try to find a good producer for an album."

The other bands that performed were Lolaloli, Time Street and the Lifeless.



“
Foot binding dies out, but
how about the binding to the
habit of heart?
”



Foot binding's final generation

By Zhang Dongya

Foot binding, practiced until the early 20th century, had catastrophic effects on the lives of generations of Chinese women. Many elderly women living today still suffer from disabilities related to the antiquated practice.

Little Feet, by Bai Budan, screened at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) last Sunday, recorded the life of an old Chinese woman with bound feet and of other women who suffered from the effects of foot binding in her village.

In addition to foot binding, it also touches on the pension disbursement problems endemic to rural China, showing the tough life that many elderly people face in their final years.



Director Bai Budan



Bai Danü sitting in her cave home. She had her feet bound at the age of seven.

Photos provided by UCCA

Bai Danü and her husband Liu Buhan, both in their 80s, lived in a cave dwelling without electricity or tap water.

To this day, Bai has bound feet. They measure a mere 10 centimeters. Her feet were broken and bound at the age of seven. There are as many as seven other women who share Bai's condition in the villages neighboring Xiayao in Youyu County, Shanxi Province.

The director Bai Budan, a 40-year-old native of Shanxi, recorded the Bai couple's life for a year in his film *Little Feet*, which tells their daily life in 2004.

Bai and her husband married in their 40s when their original spouses died. Each brought three children with them. The children, who have all married and left, failed to reach an agreement about supporting their parents, leaving the old couple to fend for themselves as farmers.

The film begins in the spring of 2004, when the couple was preparing for the season's planting.

One day in April, Bai sat on a brick bed in their cave, sifting flax seeds with a broken basket. Her husband, ill with a condition that afflicted his eyes, belly and legs, rested on the bed beside her.

Their mule broke free of its bridle and ran off from the yard. Bai rushed out to chase the mule. But with bound feet, she had to use two canes to support herself.

"I did too much labor as a youth,

and now I can't walk without a cane," she said. She chased the mule, stumbling, until she brought it under control. With others' help, she tied up the mule. She tottered back to the house to leash their farm's primary worker.

During April and May, the old couple were busy searching for workers who could help them with tilling and planting their 0.7 hectare field. They planted potatoes, flax and oats. Bai tottered to a small store to use



Bai Danü has to kneel in the field to hoe and reap her crops.

the pay phone to ask her sons and daughters for help. That year, all were too busy to help, so the couple hired a man in the village.

Some neighbors occasionally came to visit the couple. One old woman came often to chat with Bai, complaining that her children refused to provide for her. She said she wanted to kill herself.

"Pension problems in the countryside are a big issue now," said director Bai Budan. "Most elderly

people are older than 70 and have several children, but those children are older than 50 and have their own heavy burdens in supporting their own children."

"I was always worried during filming, because the people who I was filming seemed to be preparing for death," Bai Budan said.

In June, when crops grew to height, it was time to hoe the weeds. Bai could not stand and bend down, so she kneeled in the field to use the hoe.

Her hands are still strong enough for farm work even at 80. After hoeing in the morning, she went home to feed the mule. Because of the drought, they had to store rainwater in the cellar and carry it out for the animals. Bai sat beside the entrance of the cellar and used a large plastic bag to draw water from the well.

Despite Bai's hard work, her husband often yelled at her and mocked her – especially for having bound feet. "Those feet make you less than half a person!" he said.

Her husband Liu is also superstitious and believes he can tell the future. When the pain in his legs flares up, he attributes it to evil ghosts and burns white paper to chase off the ghosts. He also said he and Bai are a poor match, and that is the cause of their many disagreements.

Liu hoped to learn Bai's birthday so he could divine whether his guess was right, but everyone he asked

said they didn't know her birthday or had forgotten it.

Bai still has to go to the fields and back to the cave every day. Sometimes, when it rains and blows heavily, it is difficult for the old woman to make even one step.

When the harvest comes in October, the old couple called their children to help. Bai kneeled down for days while attempting to reap the crops on her own.

The film ends with a snowy winter and Bai hobbling about on her canes in the yard.

The director added a section of interviews with other women in the village who had their feet bound. They showed their unwrapped feet, which were all badly deformed.

One middle-aged woman said, "I wish I could wear sandals in the summer and try some good shoes, but none can fit my feet." Another woman said angrily that, "Whoever came up with the idea to do this to women's feet should have been executed by a firing squad!"

The director also found a shoemaker in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia who still makes little shoes for bound feet.

"Today, most women with bound feet are in their 80s and 90s. They are almost the last generation that I can make these small shoes for," the shoemaker said.

The documentary won the Joris Ivens Prize & Libraries Prize at Cinema of the Real, the French documentary film festival, in 2006.

Xicheng District issues coupons for museums and historical sites

By Zhang Dongya

Xicheng District Tourism Bureau issued coupons last Friday at Laoshe Tea House for 13 historical sites and museums around its district.

The coupons, in the form of postcards, are for notable places such as the Memorial Hall of Mei Lanfang, Former Residence of Li Dazhao and Museum of Lu Xun. Visitors can get the postcards from select locations for free.

The coupons are valid until February 16, 2012.



Photos by Mockingbird



Former Residence of Ji Xiaolan

CFP Photo

Former Residence of Ji Xiaolan

With postcard: free admission and 50 yuan off purchases at the gift shop.

The Former Residence of Ji Xiaolan is a typical Beijing courtyard built in the 1700s during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) for Yue Zhongqi, a descendant of Yue Fei, a renowned Song Dynasty (960-1279) general.

Ji was a well-known Qing scholar who lived in the yard starting in 1736, when he was 12. He stayed there intermittently for more than 60 years.

An old Chinese wisteria tree stands in the front yard, and a Chinese cherry apple tree is in the back, both planted by Ji.

Other ancient articles include a long-stemmed pipe, made specially for Ji to smoke.

Inside, visitors will see many Qing architectural elements, including wooden gates with ornaments, shadow walls and



Former Residence of Li Dazhao



Memorial Hall of Mei Lanfang

CFP Photo

brick carvings. The desks and mirrors in the halls are said to be originals from Ji's time. There are also Qing porcelains donated by Ji's descendants.

Where: 241 Zhushikou Xi Dajie, Xicheng District

Getting there: Take Bus 5, 23, 34, 48, 57, 201, 204 or 715 to Hufangqiao Lukou Dong.

Open: 9 am - 4 pm, daily except Monday

Tel: 6303 6712

Admission: 10 yuan; 40 yuan for package including tour guide and tea

Former Residence of Li Dazhao

With postcard: free admission for students, half-price for adults.

This was an important residence of Chinese intellectual Li Dazhao, who lived in Beijing from 1916 to 1927. He lived in eight different places, but stayed at Wenhua Hutong for the longest: four years. The courtyard is believed to have hosted many of Li's revolutionary activities, including co-founding the Communist Party of China and planning the labor movement in the north.

Where: 24 Wenhua Hutong, Xicheng District

Getting there: Take Subway

Line 1 or 2 to Fuxingmen station.

Open: 9 am - 4 pm

Tel: 6608 9208

Admission: 10 yuan

Former Residence of Soong Ching-ling

With postcard: 25 percent off admission.

This was a garden of Prince Chun of the Qing Dynasty. In 1963, Soong Ching-ling, wife of Sun Yat-sen, moved to the garden and spent the rest of her life there. It's elegantly laid out, with rocks, ponds and cypresses. Pictures, letters and historical documents provide hints as to how Song lived. An exhibition on the 1911 Revolution is on display.

Where: 46 Houhai Bei Yan, Xicheng District

Getting there: Take Bus 5 or 210 to Guozishi

Open: 9 am - 5:30 pm

Tel: 6404 4205

Admission: 20 yuan, 5 yuan for students

Continued on page 21...



Former Residence of Lu Xun

...continued from page 20

Beijing Planetarium

With postcard: half-price off the 130-yuan package, including three films in Hall of Astronomical Phenomena, Space Theater, 3D Theater and 4D Theater, as well as shows in exhibition halls.

The Beijing Planetarium reopened in 2004 after renovation. It's split into an old and new part. The old building, which was built in 1957, contains an observatory, Celestial Theater and exhibition halls. It was the first large-scale planetarium in the country and the only planetarium in Asia for a long time.

The new building, opened in 2008, has a digital space theater, 3D theater, 4D theater, exhibition hall and two observatories. Visitors can travel in a digitalized universe in the digital space theater and experience what it's like to board a spaceship in the 3D Scientific Popularization Theater. Inside the observatory is a 400-millimeter telescope that is mainly

used for viewing and photographing space at night.

Where: 138 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

Getting there: Take Subway Line 4 to Beijing Zoo station and take Exit D. The Beijing Planetarium is opposite the Beijing Zoo.

Open: 8:30 am – 4 pm

Tel: 6835 2453

Admission:

Exhibition halls: 10 yuan
Hall of Astronomical Phenomena: 45 yuan

Space Theater: 45 yuan

3D Theater: 30 yuan

4D Theater: 30 yuan

Paleozoological Museum of China

This museum, built in 2004, is the largest specialized museum in Asia showing the evolution of vertebrate animals. It will transport you into the prehistoric era. There are exhibition halls of fossils of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. The museum features more than 1,000 items

showing a wide spectrum of vertebrate fossils, from jawless "fish" to humans and their



Paleozoological Museum of China

Photos by Mockingbird

artifacts. It also features special workshops for students.

Where: 142 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

Getting there: Take Subway Line 4 to Beijing Zoo station and walk 10 minutes west; or take Bus 7, 15, 27, 45, 87, 360, 685 or 714 to Beijing Zoo. The museum is opposite Beijing Zoo and 50 meters west of Beijing Planetarium.

Tel: 8836 9210

Open: 9 am – 4 pm, daily except Monday

Admission: 20 yuan

Other destinations The Geological Museum of China

Built in 1916, this was the first public museum of natural science in

the country. The old museum features a large number of exhibitions.

Where: 15 Yangrou Hutong, Xisi, Xicheng District

Open: 9 am – 4:30 pm, daily except Monday

Admission: 30 yuan, 15 yuan for students (with postcard: 20 yuan for adults and 10 yuan for students)

Guoshoujing Memorial Hall

This shrine was built to commemorate Guo Shoujing, a Yuan Dynasty official who oversaw water transportation in the Tonghui River. With the postcard, visitors can take part in folk events held in the hall.

Where: Jia 60 Deshengmen Xi Dajie, Xicheng District

Tel: 8322 0015

Admission: Free



Where to get the postcards:

Beijing Yucai School

Where: 21 Dongjing Lu, Xicheng District

Tel: 8310 2991

Shichahai Community Service Center

Where: 11 Liuhai Hutong, Denei Dajie, Xicheng District

Tel: 6618 2179

Night biking offers new view of the city

By Zhou Ying

If any sport combines exercise and nature – and joy with physical exertion – it's night biking. It doesn't hurt that it makes for a great chance to enjoy a dinner with people who share your hobby.

No wonder the Fast Wheel Night Riding League has won more than 100 fans since its Sina Weibo group at q.weibo.com/332943 was founded in July.



Ready? Go!

Every Thursday at around 8 pm, the cyclists of Fast Wheel Night Riding League meet at Jianguomen Bridge to ride a 25-kilometer circuit. The ride normally takes 1.5 to 2 hours.

"Every week, I discuss the route with our team members in advance. We will make some adjustments according to the weather or traffic situation. But normally, we ride along Chang'an Avenue because it is beautiful at night," said Yang Jinyuan, the league's organizer and leader.

Yang organized the league in June 2010, and its membership has grown increasingly fast. "There are at most 20 cyclists when the weather is good. Even though it's cold today, we still had six riders show up," he said.

"I love sports, especially biking. I didn't expect that there were enough people like me to establish a group. Riding at night is much different than riding in the

day. In summer it can be comfortably cool and less crowded. Everything looks different, and you may see sights you would never see in daylight," Yang said.

Zhang Yiqiu, a cyclist, said biking accounts for 60 percent of his daily activity. "The bike that I ride has no brakes, so riding it is an exciting experience. I love riding so much that on some days I sit on the saddle even if I'm not going out," he said.

Chen Gan, another riding enthusiast, has been involved in bike sports for almost two years. He rides not only in Beijing, but also between cities. "I like riding because I love the freedom and nature," he said.

"Apart from city riding, we also organize some longer rides that take up to 10 days. For me riding is a sport, and it can help me to improve my physical health and state of mind," Chen said.

Beyond the sport

Yang said there are as many as three similar groups

in Beijing. "Unlike the others, our night riding league doesn't focus on the equipment. We are about having a good time with friends," he said.

Yang sees night riding as more of a lifestyle than a sport.

"There is a spirit of teamwork in everything we do. We design the route together beforehand and help each other along the way. After the trip, we choose a restaurant where we can have a big meal and have a great time together," he said.

The league is open to anyone who knows how to ride a bicycle.

"We welcome anyone who knows how to ride. For fresh riders, I suggest they ride a folding bike because it's easy to carry and small enough to put in a car," Yang said.

Zhang said night biking has dramatically changed his life. "I changed my clothing style and the way that I think about life. I also met more friends and feel happier," he

said. "Biking is a chance to overcome my limits. Part of the trip is about facing a challenge and overcoming fear."

"Most of our group members work in marketing, PR or media. There are some artists as well, including one pop singer. We have a passion for life and we want to promote riding as a trend for the next generation," Yang said.

Riding without borders

With nighttime temperatures dropping far below zero, Yang decided to stop organizing night rides.

"This may be the last city ride this year because it can be dangerous if you don't have warm enough clothes," he said.

The club will switch to other exercises, such as skiing and badminton. "We do not want to stop having fun, and we want to stay in shape for our big riding trip next year," Yang said. The group is planning to ride around Taiwan next October.

He said the league will set a similar trip plan each year. "It is like theme tourism. We

will rent bikes in Taiwan and find some sponsors for our trip. Maybe next year it will be Qinghai Lake or France," he said.

Yang said the group will have some safety training sessions before heading for Taiwan. "We have to prepare well to ensure everyone's safety," he said.

Speaking from his own experience of long-distance riding, Yang said he would never forget his previous trip from Beijing to Tianjin by bike.

"It is 138 kilometers from Beijing to Tianjin, and it took us almost 9 hours. We had some problems on the way, but finally we overcame them. It was great being able to live life on the road," he said.

"We have also as many as six female riders in our city night riding group, and they are really good. My only expectation for our league is to attract more people with common interests and to keep it going for as long as we can," Yang said.



Fast Wheel Night Riding League

Photos by Zhou Ying

Dining

Western holidays of Yao Chi Chinese Restaurant of the Grand Millennium

From December 23 to January 2, enjoy the holidays with friends and family at Yao Chi Chinese Restaurant of the Grand Millennium Beijing.

Yao Chi is serving a Christmas and New Year's menu in a traditional atmosphere. Its master chef will prepare two delicate sets to help you celebrate this holiday in a special way!

Where: Yao Chi Chinese Restaurant, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 23, 2011 – January 2, 2012

Tel: 8587 6888 ext. 3013



A basket of holiday goodies

Spread joy with a Christmas gift basket from the Swissotel Beijing.

Filled to the brim with delicious holiday treats such as homemade truffles, German Christmas stollen, cookies, chocolate Santa Claus, fine wines and other surprises, these beautifully-wrapped baskets are available in three sizes.

Where: Swissotel Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie

Cost: Swissotel Beijing Christ-

mas Hamper, 1,188 yuan; Merry Christmas Hamper, 988 yuan; Wine Connoisseur Christmas Hamper, 588 yuan

Tel: 6553 2288 ext. 2127



Winter tonic warmers at Aria

Aria executive chef Matthew McCool's healthy winter tonic soups provide the perfect antidote to bitterly cold weather. Deliciously warm and nourishing, they are guaranteed to entice your taste buds and lift your spirits.

The delectable ingredients include smoked lobster consommé and braised lamb, tender roasted chicken breast, ham hocks and split peas. Enjoy a healthy winter at Aria with the six varieties.

Where: China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 36, 6505 5838

Classic high tea celebrations at Lobby Lounge

Against a stunning imperial palace-inspired backdrop and classical music, experience the excellence and elegance of Afternoon Tea at the Lobby Lounge.

Sit back and share delectable sandwich delights, enticing pas-

tries and miniature scones, ideally paired with your favorite cup of jasmine, chrysanthemum or Earl Grey tea.

China World Hotel, Beijing's luxurious Afternoon Tea experience is available for 188 yuan with a 15 percent gratuity fee for the set.

Where: China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Cost: 188 yuan (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 37, 6505 5838.



Christmas at Grand Mercure Beijing

Another year has passed, and Grand Mercure Beijing Central welcomes all to its Christmas celebration. Celebrate the season with family, friends and loved ones for a joyous night in a perfect setting.

This year, the hotel is proud to present a show by well-known crosstalkers He Yunwei, Li Jing, Xu Deliang and Wang Wenlin. The night's raffle prizes include iPhones, iPads, TV set and trip tickets. Santa Claus will be on hand to deliver Christmas gifts and New Year's blessings.

Enjoy the magic of Christmas at V9 restaurant with a scrumptious seafood buffet, pepper oysters, blades of beef steak, irresistible desserts and free

wines, holiday cocktails, soft drinks and a joyous selection of East-meets-West specialties.

Stop by for a perfect way to celebrate Christmas Day with your family and loved ones at China Kitchen with a traditional Chinese menu prepared by our talented chef.

Where: Grand Mercure Beijing Central, 6 Xuanwumen Nei Dajie, Xicheng District

When: December 24, dinner 6 – 8 pm; show 8 – 11 pm

Cost: package options of 3,888 yuan per person, 2,888 yuan per person and 1,888 yuan per person

Tel: 6603 6688



Bubbly Christmas Eve at Havana of Grand Millennium

Christmas isn't all stockings and snowmen. Come and enjoy a memorable Christmas at Havana of the Grand Millennium Beijing.

Buy a 750-milliliter bottle of Mumm Champagne for 836 yuan on Christmas Eve, get a second 375-milliliter bottle of Mumm Champagne free. Celebrate at Havana with a special promotion to make your holiday luxurious.

Where: Havana, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 24

Cost: 836 yuan (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 8587 6888 ext. 3015

Hotel

International Labor leader chooses Swissotel

Juan Somavia, director-general of International Labor Organization, stayed at the Swissotel Beijing Hong Kong Macau Center, where he was greeted by hotel management.

Juan Somavia was elected to serve as the ninth Director-General of the ILO by the organization's governing body on March 23, 1998. His five-year term began on March 4, 1999, when he became the first representative from the Southern Hemisphere to head the organization.

In March 2003, Somavia was re-elected for a second five-year term, and then for a third term in November 2008.

Training

10-day intensive Chinese course

New to Beijing and looking for a crash course in the essentials of Chinese language?

This class will teach you what you need to survive on the city's bustling streets. Taught by a dedicated teacher, it will provide the learner with a full knowledge of proper pronunciation, pinyin and the basic words and expressions essential in everyday life situations.

Registration costs 1,500 yuan. Classes will meet Monday to Friday from 10 am to noon starting December 19. Be sure to enroll early.

For more information, visit cultureyard.net.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Nightlife**Voodoo Kungfu**

This local metal band released the album *Dark Work Music* in April, combining traditional Mongolian and Tibetan musical themes with a heavy metal oeuvre.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 100 yuan at the door

Sat, Sept. 24**Nightlife
Anthony
Wong Concert**

This Hong Kong singer and composer is well-known for being the vocalist of renowned duo Tat Ming Pair

in the 1980s. After the group was disbanded in 1990, Wong continued his musical career as a solo singer. He released his latest album last month, named after a poem by Li Yu, the last king of the Southern Tang Dynasty (937-975).

Where: The One Club, Building 5, 718 Art and Culture Zone, 19 Ganluyuan, Gaobeidian Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 580 yuan advance purchase, 680 yuan at the door

Tel: 5129 0082

**Movie****Maundy Thursday (2006)**

This South Korean film is about a convicted murderer awaiting execution and the bond he forms with a suicidal young woman who starts visiting him in prison every Thursday.

Where: Lady Book Salon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 20 yuan for a cup of tea

Tel: 6270 1928

Sun, Dec. 25

Exhibition**One of You - New Works by Konstantin Bessmertny**

Born in Russia in 1964, Konstantin Bessmertny established his studio in Macao in the 1990s. His art before and after he moved to Macao lies in the new elements and inspirations he absorbed through the cultural environment and lifestyle of the mixed Chinese and European cultures.

Where: AFA Beijing Contemporary Art Center, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 19, daily except Monday, 11 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9625

Tel: 6402 5080

Movie**Hometown Boy (2010)**

In this documentary, artist Liu Xiaodong returns to his hometown in Jincheng, Liaoning Province. By painting his family and childhood friends, Liu finds the enormous changes his town and the people in it have undergone. The film won Best Documentary at the 48th Golden Horse Awards in Taiwan last month.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Fri, Sept. 23

When: 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 8459 9269



劉小康 + 金城小子
2010.11.17 2011.01.10

Sun, Sept. 25**Nightlife
Blackwater**

Drawing from its rich repertoire of Irish songs, Blackwater is a band of international musicians based in Beijing that was founded last year. Singer Desmond McGarry is Irish-Canadian, guitarist Daniel Brustman hails from the US, accordionist Zoe Wang from China and Nico Torre on the tenor banjo and mandolin from France.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6401 4611

Mon, Sept. 26**Movie****Room of Death (2007)**

The body of a kidnapped 12-year-old blind girl is discovered in a warehouse near the site of a recent hit-and-run accident. Soon after, a young diabetic girl goes missing.

A young police embarking on her first major investigation believes there is a link between the two cases.

Where: French Cultural Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 6553 2627

**Wed, Sept. 28****Concert****Lawrence Foster and Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini**

The opera conductor Lawrence Foster and Italian Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini present selections from classical operas such as *Carmen* and *Turandot*.

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: 10 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 6436 8998

**Tue, Sept. 27****Exhibition****Kolkosz: Parallax**

Kolkosz is the French art duo of Samuel Boutruche and Benjamin Moreau. Their works include four sculptures consisting of picture frames nestled within one another to create a framed optical illusion, a series of photos of the artists taken at international museums and a series of photos - taken by NASA during the 1960s - of astronauts training in Arizona for the moon landing.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 10, 2012, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 8459 9269

Thu, Sept. 29**Movie****Outrage (2010)**

Directed by Takeshi Kitano, this Japanese film depicts a cycle of destruction and vengeance in a crime organization.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 5900 9473

(By He Jianwei)

